

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 /078 W

----- 068294

R 100829Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5856

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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EO 11652 NA

TAGS: PFOR YO MX XK XH XA

SUBJ: TITO INTERVIEW

1. ON THE EVE OF TITO VISIT TO MEXICO, PANAMA, AND VENEZUELA, BELGRADE DAILY "BORBA" PUBLISHED INTERVIEW OF TITO BY MEXICAN TV COMMENTATOR MONTEZUMA ON MARCH 9. INTERVIEW TOOK FORM OF TOUR D'HORIZON. WE WERE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN TITO'S REMARKS ON WESTERN SAHARA QUESTION, 25TH CPSU CONGRESS, EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE(ECPC), AND HIS OWN HEALTH.

2. WESTERN SAHARA: TITO NOTED SOMEWHAT CRYPTICALLY THAT IN THE WESTERN SAHARA, AS IN THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, UNNAMED "FOREIGN FORCES" SUCCEEDED IN CREATING DISCORD AMONG ARAB COUNTRIES AND IN THAT WAY WEAKENED THEIR JUST STRUGGLE.

3. SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS AND ECPC: TITO SAID THE CONGRESS, WHICH WAS VERY SIGNIFICANT FOR THE SOVIET UNION, FUNDAMENTALLY DID NOT CHANGE CPSU POLICY. HE SPECULATED THERE MIGHT BE SOME PERSONNEL CHANGES DUE TO AGRICULTURAL FAILURES, (EVIDENTLY HE HADN'T HEARD ABOUT POLYANSKIY
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YET). NOTING THE EXPRESSIONS OF INDEPENDENCE MADE BY

"CERTAIN EUROPEAN PARTIES INCLUDING THE YUGOSLAV PARTY", HE CONCLUDED THAT THE ECPC PREPARATIONS WOULD CONTINUE FOR A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME, BUT THAT HE WAS SURE THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE REACHED WHICH WOULD "HONOR DIFFERENCES IN THE STATUS OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES".

4. ON HIS HEALTH, TITO SAID THAT IN HIS MOST RECENT BOUT EARLY THIS YEAR WITH SCIATICA HE HAD ALSO CAUGHT A COLD AND IT WAS EVIDENT TO EVERYONE THAT HE WAS ILL. BUT NOW, HE SAID, "I AM SATISFIED WITH MY HEALTH. I AM COMPLETELY HEALTHY".

5. COMMENT: PORTIONS OF TITO INTERVIEW WERE TELEVISED ON MARCH 8 EVENING NEWS. COMPARED WITH PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN RECENT MONTHS, TITO'S PERFORMANCE WAS SUB-PAR AND LACKING IN SPONTANEITY. HE READ HIS ANSWERS TO MONTEZUMA'S QUESTIONS FROM A PREVIOUSLY PREPARED TEXT, SLURRED HIS WORDS MORE NOTICEABLY THAN USUAL, AND STUMBLED OVER WORDS SEVERAL TIMES, AND HAD TO REPEAT HIMSELF.
SILBERMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEALTH, POLITICAL PARTIES, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BELGRA01541
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760090-0601
From: BELGRADE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760377/aaaacpxs.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 MAY 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TITO INTERVIEW
TAGS: PFOR, YO, MX, XK, XH, XA, UR, SS, (TITO, JOSIP B)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006